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State fund
guardian

April 1995

New VP of Underwriting

On March 27, Larry P. Wiedey, CPCU, joined State Fund as Vice President of Underwriting . He comes to us with over 20 years of experience in the insurance industry.

Larry has worked in the private insurance industry and has held various management level positions including, Commercial Business Manager, Product Manager, Regional Underwriting Manager, and Regional Operations Superintendent. He has broad-based experience having worked approximately 13 years for Firemans Fund and another eight for Transamerica and USF&G.

He has experience in implementing an underwriting and branch team concept. A branch team concept is designed to improve operations through customer-focused, value-added strategies. His background is unique in that he also has management experience in the areas of marketing, audit and loss control operations, and product management.

Larry received his BA in Psychology from the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. He also holds the Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) designation.

Larry brings to us a tremendous amount of experience in areas that are fundamental to the future success of the State Fund.

Welcome Larry!

What Were You Doing in 1979?

In 1979 John Thomas got his drivers license, Crystal Murphy gave birth to a son named Chris, and Frank Graham was a major in the United States Army.

Laury Lewis was the Director of the State Fund in 1979 and Bill Visser, Myrna Hammond, Crystal Murphy, and Helen Osterloth were all hired in 1979.

Paul Bogumill graduated number one in Chicago's South East High School class of '79 and the State Fund reduced its rates by 3 percent in July 1979 .

That was the last time the workers' compensation premium rates went down in Montana.

Now, sixteen, long years later the Montana State Fund Board of Directors have announced a premium rate reduction.

Effective July 1, overall premium rates will go down 18 percent, saving Montana business approximately $26 million this fiscal year.

A Thank You

Dear Friends of the Humane Society,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Staff I would like to extend my sincere thanks for sponsoring a cat and dog cage and for the additional donation. Your support helps us to provide a clean, compassionate, professional animal shelter

Thank you again, for supporting this program. I would also like to invite you to stop in the shelter for a visit. (you may find "someone" you can't live without!)

Sincerely,
Deborah Rehmann
Director

Spring Soccer

Did you know that State Fund employees Tor Gudmundsen, John Wilkins, Blaine Gilbert, Aidan Myhre, Gregg Pratt, Dave Miller, Peter Donnelly (Lynn's husband), Rich Dosier (June's husband), and Kim Dosier (June's daughter) are members of the *Eagles*, a YMCA spring soccer league team?

And did you know that the *Eagles* are undefeated?! They beat the *Wing and a Prayers* their first time out with a score 7-0. They went on to a 3-3 tie against the *Rookies*.

In the *Rookies* game, State Fund took a 1-0 lead with a score by John Wilkins from

continued on back

State Fund Employees Participate in Red Cross Blood Drawing

On Monday, March 27, several State Fund employees participated in the Red Cross blood drawing. A big thank you and great job to all who participated!

The next blood drawing is scheduled for April 30 at DHES. Please schedule your next appointment by calling 1-800-272-9797.

The Trainer Knocks!

Opportunities for Personal and Professional Development

Our first new employee orientation was held April 7. Thanks to the participants for making it a success. Send your comments in to help make it better the next time. The next orientation will be about May 5th—precise date TBA via ZIP!

Congratulations to Danielle Vincent in Administration/Finance who graduated from the College of Technology SBAS course on April 4. Congratulations also to Laurie Weidlich and the folks in the Claim Department—they've started a periodic Brown Bag series covering medical issues of interest to adjusters. Way to go!

I'd love to help celebrate everyone's success in a training opportunity, but I don't always know about them. If you or someone you know has successfully completed a training opportunity let me know and we'll recognize them right here every month!

Frank

Montana State Professional Development Center classes:

Approaching Supervision
April 25, 8:30-4:30, $65
The Manager as Mediator
April 26, May 1 and 10, $155
Achieving Secretarial Excellence
May 3, 8:30-noon, $50
On Becoming Assertive
May 3, 1-4:30, $50
All Kidding Aside: Preventing Harassment
May 3, 8:30-noon, $50
Creating a Thinking Environment in the Workplace
May 4, 8:30-4:30, $65
Contemporary Writing Skills
May 4, 1-4:30 and
May 5, 8:30-noon, $65

Current offerings from the **Computer School** include:

Beginning WordPerfect for Windows
April 18-20 and
April 25, 4:30-6:30, $160
Intermediate WordPerfect for Windows
April 26-27 and
may 2-4, 4:30-6:30, $195
Intro to Windows
April 27-28, 9-noon, $125
Lotus for Windows
May 8-11, 9-noon, $260

Need more info?...Have a good idea?.. Send your ideas, needs, suggestions to Frank via ZIP!, phone 9333 or leave a note!

"Birds On A Wire"— March All-Employee Meeting

Human Resources

Personnel changes since March 1, 1995.

Promotions

Carrie Burke, Claim
Kathy Rowsey, Claim
Robert Silberling, Claim
Lorna Smith, Claim
Claudia Thomas, Claim

New Hires

Sherry Carroll, Claim
Cindy Gilbert, Claim
Vicki Hirschi, Claim
Tiffany Jaeger, Claim
Valerie McAlister, Claim
Christy Richem, Underwriting
Terry St. Clair, Underwriting
Larry Wiedey, Underwriting

Departures

Bill DeCou, Claim
Lon Doyle, Claim
Michelle Doyle, Claim
Terry Dumont, Field Representative
Tanna Funk, Claim
Bonnie Holbrook, Claim
Bryan Moran, Underwriting

Kudos Korner

Kudos to Robyn Pugh —a job well done!

Robyn recently received a very nice letter of praise from a claimant. The claimant appreciated Robyn's sincerity and thanked her for her efficiency in processing the claim.

Kudos to Jay Phillips —a creative concept!

After arduous battle in the Premium in Advance trenches, Jay has used her creative talents to develop the "J-Principle". The "J-Principle" provides policyholder customers with advanced premiums and estimates, reducing much of the PIA confusion.

Governor's Cup

The challenge has been made—which floor can run or walk the most cumulative miles in the Governor's Cup?

The Annual Governor's Cup is slated for June 3rd. This fun event is great for all levels of runners, walkers, and strollers.

For the hard-core runner there is the marathon, 26.6 big ones! There are also 20K, 10K and 5K runs for the less ambitious runner.

If you are interested in forming a State Fund marathon relay team or would like to organize the challenge for your floor, please call Shawna Swanz at 6502.

Aidan will talk more about the logistics and the winning prize at the next all-employee meeting.

Meet the Board of Directors. . .

Les Hirsch

Les Hirsch was appointed to the State Fund Board of Directors in 1991.

Les was born and raised in Miles City. He is a farmer/rancher and former legislator. Mr. Hirsch served as a representative during the 1977 and 1979 sessions and a as senator from 1982-1986.

He and his wife Donna have been married 26 years and have 3 girls; Lori 20, Sara 18, and Heidi 15.

Les keeps very busy on the ranch and really enjoys public service.

City Engineers Announce Construction

As early as May 1, for as long as six weeks, Broadway between Park Avenue and Warren Street will be closed due to road construction.

Marvin and Fred will get us further information about the parking situation while the street is under construction.

During construction, please be careful crossing Broadway!

What Has Happened to the Fish Bowl?

The center offices on the first floor, affectionately known as the Fish Bowl, have been removed to provide additional work space in the Claim Department.

As soon as all of the files are cleared out, the Lektrievers will be removed and one of the Claim Units will setup shop in that area.

The whole first floor will eventually be redesigned to create a more efficient work area. You will see some new carpet and other improvements.

A draft of the proposed floor plan will be posted on the first floor bulletin board within the next few days—be sure and check it out!

If you have questions or comments, please call Chuck Driscoll.

Hot-Line, Hot-Line

Following the Murer Supreme Court decision that provides workers' compensation claimants with additional benefits, State Fund has established a hot-line number that customers can call leaving their name, claim number, address and phone number on a voice message.

State Fund will retrieve the message, review the claim and determine if the claimant is eligible for additional benefits. Following the review, the claimant will be notified of the findings.

If you have questions, about the Murer case or the hot-line number, call Debbie Flansaas at 6485.

Employee Satisfaction Survey Reveals...

Our Vision is Clear

Last Friday, consultants Ann Clancy and Dr. Joe Floyd met with 21 members of the management team to announce the results of the recent employee satisfaction survey.

Results revealed that over 50 percent of the respondents said they agreed or totally agreed with the major objective of the State Fund—to provide good customer service.

The majority of respondents also agreed with the eleven other questions related to the overall direction of the Fund!

During last Friday's meeting, the consultants outlined the general theme of survey responses, answered questions, and helped develop an Action Plan to address employee issues.

With careful analysis, the group identified the top three priorities:

1. Prioritize/set goals
2. Plan transition and manage change
3. Communicate transition plans effectively

Carl and Joanne will conduct a series of nine, two hour meetings to be held May 3, 4, 5 to share and discuss the survey results. In addition, a cross-departmental focus group will be created to address the survey results and develop an Action Plan to deal with employee issues.

For more information, please contact Joanne Shydian.

Message from the President

Internally, as well as, externally dramatic change is occurring that will affect State Fund services. The Montana State Legislature this year has worked hard to design changes that will improve and strengthen the workers' compensation system. Internally, we continue to evolve into a dynamic organization that provides superior service.

Change is not an easy process. It challenges us to develop new ways to confront and correct our shortcomings and allows us to build upon our strengths.

These difficult, but necessary changes, will make us a much stronger organization, one that can be called Montana's workers' compensation insurance carrier of choice!

I want to personally thank all of you for your hard work and commitment during the past few months. Keep up the excellent work!

Fraud Unit Experiencing Great Success

Most of you probably heard about the well coordinated fraud "bust" that occurred last week.

American Expressways of Great Falls was charged with defrauding the State Fund of $1.3 million in premiums. The dollar amounts involved are eight times greater than the next largest fraud case handled by the Department of Justice.

The State Fund Fraud Unit was established by the Legislature in 1993 and since that time our aggressive fraud detection program has saved the state of Montana more then $2 million.

State Fund is unique in that it is the only workers' compensation insurance provider in Montana with its own dedicated fraud unit—a distinct advantage over private insurers.

Our Fraud Unit, coordinated by Bill Visser, has an administrative assistant, Lois Vick; 5 full time field investigators; and its own prosecuting attorney, Betsy Horsman-Wiitala.

In an upcoming issue of the Guardian we will share with you a day in the life of a fraud investigator.

The *Guardian* is a monthly newsletter published for and by the Montana State Compensation Insurance Fund to educate and inform State Fund employees on all aspects of the workers' compensation industry.

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Letters to the Editor will be accepted from current State Fund employees and are to be submitted to the Editor no later than the last Monday of each month. The employee's name, section and department, and phone number must accompany the letter. Letters deemed inappropriate to the goals and objectives of the *Guardian* or the State Fund will be returned to the author with an explanation of denial. Letters to the Editor do not reflect the policy or official positions of either the Board of Directors or the management of the State Fund.

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Soccer continued

a Blaine Gilbert assist. Tor Gudmundsen followed with another goal leaving State Fund ahead 2-0.

The *Rookies* made a 3-0 run on the *Eagles* leaving the score at 3-2 with only seconds remaining. An assist by Tor lead to an *Eagles* goal to end the game 3-3.

Several miraculous saves by Peter Donnelly saved the day for the *Eagles*.

The *Eagles* will play more than 10 games this spring. If you would like to see State Fund employees in action, please see Aidan for a game schedule.

If you are interested in playing in the fall soccer league, call Aidan or Tor.

Employee of the Month

Congratulations to Nancy Butler, Vice President, Legal; employee of the month for March.

Nancy was chosen as employee of the month for her successful presentation and lobbying of key legislation while also performing the additional demanding duties of managing the Legal Department. She is a dedicated employee, working long hours.

Nancy always manages to maintain a sense of humor while working professionally and competently. She sets an example for the entire Legal Department and other departments through her commitment to get the job done efficiently and fairly.

Nancy has been with the State Fund for more than 10 years and has been very active in the American Association of State Compensation Insurance Funds (AASCIF) serving on their Law and National Issues Committees.

The Legal Department salutes Nancy's accomplishments—the State Fund is fortunate to have her!

In her spare time Nancy likes to read and workout. She and her husband, Tom, have two girls Sara, 7, and Megan, 4. Together they enjoy ice skating and swimming.